

Tears for Molly

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Don't look at me
I can't stand it when people stare
Pity is worse than death
It wears the mask of sympathy
Sometimes I want to shout, "Go away"
But my lips simply won't listen

I really should have hugged her
But I didn't—I couldn't
Her cheeks formed an eternal kiss
And sickness gave her an awful haircut

She used to be so pretty
I wanted to be just like her
Of course, my doll, Molly
Wanted to be just like me

I remember my long, cotton dress
With violets that skipped whenever I did
They hid my tree-scarred knobby knees

I never dreamed of a white Christmas
I never dreamed of a black Christmas
I got both when I was born:
A drug letter from mama, "umbilically yours"

Mama smelled of honey and butter on my toast
That I always managed to get in my hair
She told me she loved me
My arms squeezed her with dittos of love

I learned in one day that my days would shorten
I had no time for green eggs and ham
I'd never have them in a tree
I'd never have them with a bee
The Cat in the Hat would never come back
And finding Spot was Dick and Jane's problem--
It wasn't mine

Mama's veins are resting now--
Soon mine will too
"Now I know my H I V—tell me what you think . . . of . . . me?"